AD-A265 085



STUDY PROJECT

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

NORTH TO THE EUPHRATES: PART ONE THE TAKING OF FOB COBRA

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL FRANK R. HANCOCK
United States Army

DTIC
ELECTE
MAY 28 1993
S E D

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 1993



U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

93-11789



93 5 25 184

Unclassified
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY	3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE	
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION U.S. Army War College 6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Root Hall, Building 122 Carlisle, PA 17013-5050	7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION 8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)	10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS PROGRAM ELEMENT NO. / PROJECT NO. / TASK NO. / WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.

11. TITLE (Include Security Classification)

North to the Euphrates: Part One the Taking of FOB Cobra

12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S)
Lieutenant Colonel Frank R. Hancock

13a. TYPE OF REPORT	13b. TIME COVERED	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day)	15. PAGE COUNT
Study Project	FROM _____ TO _____	93/04/15	51

16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION

17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	

19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)

On 24 February 1991, the 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) conducted the largest helicopter air assault in military history as it struck 90 kilometers inside Iraq with over 2,000 men. The Division's assault established a Foward Operating Base (FOB Cobra) which supported the attack to sever Highway 8 in the Euphrates River Valley. My battalion was the lead battalion of the air assault and subsequently captured 375 prisoners in combat operations at FOB Cobra. This study examines the air assault into Iraq along with other missions that the battalion conducted in Saudi Arabia and draws out lessons that could be used in future conflicts.

20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT	21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
☒ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☐ SAME AS RPT ☐ OTIC USERS	Unclassified

22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL	22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code)	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL
COL (RET) PHILLIP W. MOCK	(717) 245-3721	AWCAC

DD Form 1473, JUN 86 *Previous editions are obsolete.* SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

Unclassified

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

NORTH TO THE EUPHRATES: PART ONE THE TAKING OF FOB COBRA

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Frank R. Hancock
United States Army

Colonel Phillip Mock
Project Adviser

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Frank R. Hancock, LTC, USA

TITLE: North to the Euphrates: Part One the Taking of FOB Cobra

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 15 April 1993 PAGES: 51 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

On 24 February 1991, the 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) conducted the largest helicopter air assault in military history as it struck 90 kilometers inside Iraq with over 2,000 men. The Division's assault established a Foward Operating Base (FOB Cobra) which supported the attack to sever Highway 8 in the Euphrates River Valley. My battalion was the lead battalion of the air assault and subsequently captured 375 prisoners in combat operations at FOB Cobra. This study examines the air assault into Iraq along with other missions that the battalion conducted in Saudi Arabia and draws out lessons that could be used in future conflicts.

INSPECTED 5

Accesion For	
NTIS CRA&I	☒
DTIC TAB	☐
Unannounced	☐
Justification	
By	
Distribution /	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and / or Special
A-1	

"Let me call your attention to the fact that our badge is the great American eagle. This is a fitting emblem for a division that will crush its enemies by falling upon them like a thunderbolt from the skies."

MG Lee- First division commander
of the 101st Airborne Division
19 August, 1942[1]

"During Desert Storm the Air Force and the Armor forces were the thunder but the 101st was the lightning."

General Schwarzkopf
April, 1991
Camp Eagle II, Saudi Arabia[2]

INTRODUCTION

On February 24 1991, the 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) launched the largest helicopter air assault in military history.[3] More than 2,000 soldiers with vehicles, artillery and supplies were lifted 90 kilometers inside Iraq. The aim of the air assault was to establish a Foward Operating Base (FOB Cobra) that would be used to support the 101st's air assault, on the next day, to cut Highway 8 in the Euphrates river valley. In the air assault to establish FOb Cobra, my battalion (1-327 Infantry) was designated the lead unit for the division and ended up capturing 375 enemy soldiers on the objective.

During the seven months the battalion spent in Saudi Arabia and Iraq it participated in a variety of missions and learned many lessons. This paper will discuss how we handled these missions and what lessons we learned.

DEPLOYMENT

"We're not Iran"

Col Hill, 1st Bde Cdr, talking
to his Brigade before deployment
to Saudi Arabia
Aug,1990

On August 2, 1990 Iraq invaded its neighbor, Kuwait. On August 7, the 101st was notified that it would be deploying to Saudi Arabia as part of the XVIII Airborne Corps. The battalion, at the time, was the Division Ready Force 9 (DRF-9) tasked with the responsibility of "pushing" the division out to Saudi Arabia. For three weeks the battalion ran the deployment stations for the division until it was relieved of that responsibility by the 20th Engineer Battalion, an XVIII Airborne Corps Support Group unit. This movement marked the first time the division had deployed to battle since the Vietnam War.

The battalion began its deployment to Saudi Arabia on 14 September 1990 and closed 24 hours later. The battalion deployed 715 soldiers to Saudi Arabia, along with 71 vehicles. Upon arrival the battalion was stationed at King Fahd International Airport (Camp Eagle II) along with the rest of the division. Camp Eagle II was located about 80 miles north of Dharan on the east coast of Saudi Arabia. By the time the battalion had closed into Camp Eagle,the division had been given the mission to be the covering force unit in the XVIII Airborne Corps' defensive scheme. To do

this mission, the division had decided to rotate its brigades into the covering force area while keeping one brigade at Camp Eagle II for base protection. Since my brigade, 1st Brigade, was the last brigade to deploy we were also the last to leave Camp Eagle II to go to the covering force area.

While the battalion was at Camp Eagle II (from 15 Sept-30 Oct) it concentrated on acclimatization and preparing for combat. The battalion trained heavily on breaching minefields (as we thought we were possibly going to Kuwait City), vehicle identification, combat lifesaving techniques, chemical decontamination and physical endurance. Since there was a real sense of impending battle, the training was very productive. The battalion staff was busy training for the Iraqi threat and the defensive and offensive missions that we were possibly going to receive. In particular, the staff worked on the details of the covering force mission that we were preparing to assume.

To acclimatize the battalion, we mirrored our work regimen after the Arabs. Our daily routine would start at 0530 and would end around 1800. Since the heat was still unbearable in Sept and Oct (115-120 degrees during the middle of the day), we would not work between 1100-1600 hours. During that time we would literally stay in our tents, drink water and rest. To illustrate how miserable the weather was, the first time we saw a cloud was 22 Oct or 39 days after we arrived in country.

Perhaps the most important part of our stay in Camp Eagle II was the nurturing of the troops' morale. At this time (late September and early October) there were two areas that I believed were critical to bolstering morale. The first of these was making sure that the soldiers knew that the country was behind them and that what they were doing was right. Much has been made about the Vietnam War and how many of the soldiers felt abandoned by their countrymen. To make sure this feeling did not become pervasive in the battalion, we constantly drummed into the troops why they were in Saudi Arabia and how what they were trying to accomplish was not only right but much appreciated by the American people.

To help create the impression that the country was behind us, we had decided to try to get as much mail sent to our battalion as possible. Before coming to Saudi Arabia we had mailed the entire battalion roster to the city of San Mateo California (which had a relationship with the battalion stemming from the Vietnam War) and to a small grade school in Kentucky. Both the city and the school immediately started sending letters to the battalion which reinforced the idea that we had the support of the American people.

The battalion's support group organization was also established and functioning well. The married personnel knew that their loved ones were being well taken care of by the staybehind personnel and family support group. This helped

take some of the pressure off the back of the married soldiers.

The second area, for bolstering morale, was convincing the battalion that when we ultimately fought the Iraqis we would defeat them. Much had been made up to this time about the "battle hardened" Iraqi soldiers and their eight year war with Iran. The media made much of how the Iraqis were masters of desert warfare. Intelligence briefings reinforced the idea that this was the world's fourth largest army and that they were well equipped; nerve gas, Mig-29's, astro mortars, triangle defenses, T-72 tanks, etc.

To offset this idea that the Iraqis were nearly invincible, we began a concentrated effort to look for Iraq's weaknesses in equipment and tactics and to see how our tactics and equipment could exploit them. From battalion commander down to the individual soldier, we studied the Iraqi order of battle, tactics and equipment and eventually became confident that when push came to shove we would be victorious. The saying "We're not Iran", which our brigade commander first echoed before going to Saudi Arabia, became the phrase which summed up our confidence.

As the battalion continued to train at Camp Eagle II the rest of the division and XVIII Airborne Corps were active. The division had started to move part of its units north to the covering force area. The first move was to establish a Foward Operating Base (Bastogne) at the city of An Nuayriyah which was on Tapline road and about 115 km's

south of the Kuwaiti border.[See Figure 1] By the end of September, the 2nd Brigade had established a second FOB (Oasis) at the abandoned desert town of Qaryat as Sufla which was 75 km's west of FOB Bastogne. The division would ultimately have a covering force area that stretched 115 km's from An Nuariyah, west along Tapline road, to the town of Al Wariah.

THE COVERING FORCE

> "This place is so barren it makes Death Valley look like a Club Med resort".
>
> Ltc Hancock in a letter to his wife describing what the covering force area looked like

At the end of October the battalion prepared to take its place in the covering force mission. The sector given to my battalon was the most western and northern portion of the XVIII Airborne Corps sector. Our mission was to be the forward element of the division's covering force, guard the division's western flank and, upon being attacked, fall back through the 2nd Brigade's sector to another defensive position some 40 km's to our rear. The Iraqi force arrayed against our brigade's sector at this time was one armored division. The threat arrayed against the entire division sector was 2 armored divisions and one mechanized division.[4] [See Figure 2]

There were several challenges in accomplishing our covering force mission. First was the sheer magnitude of our

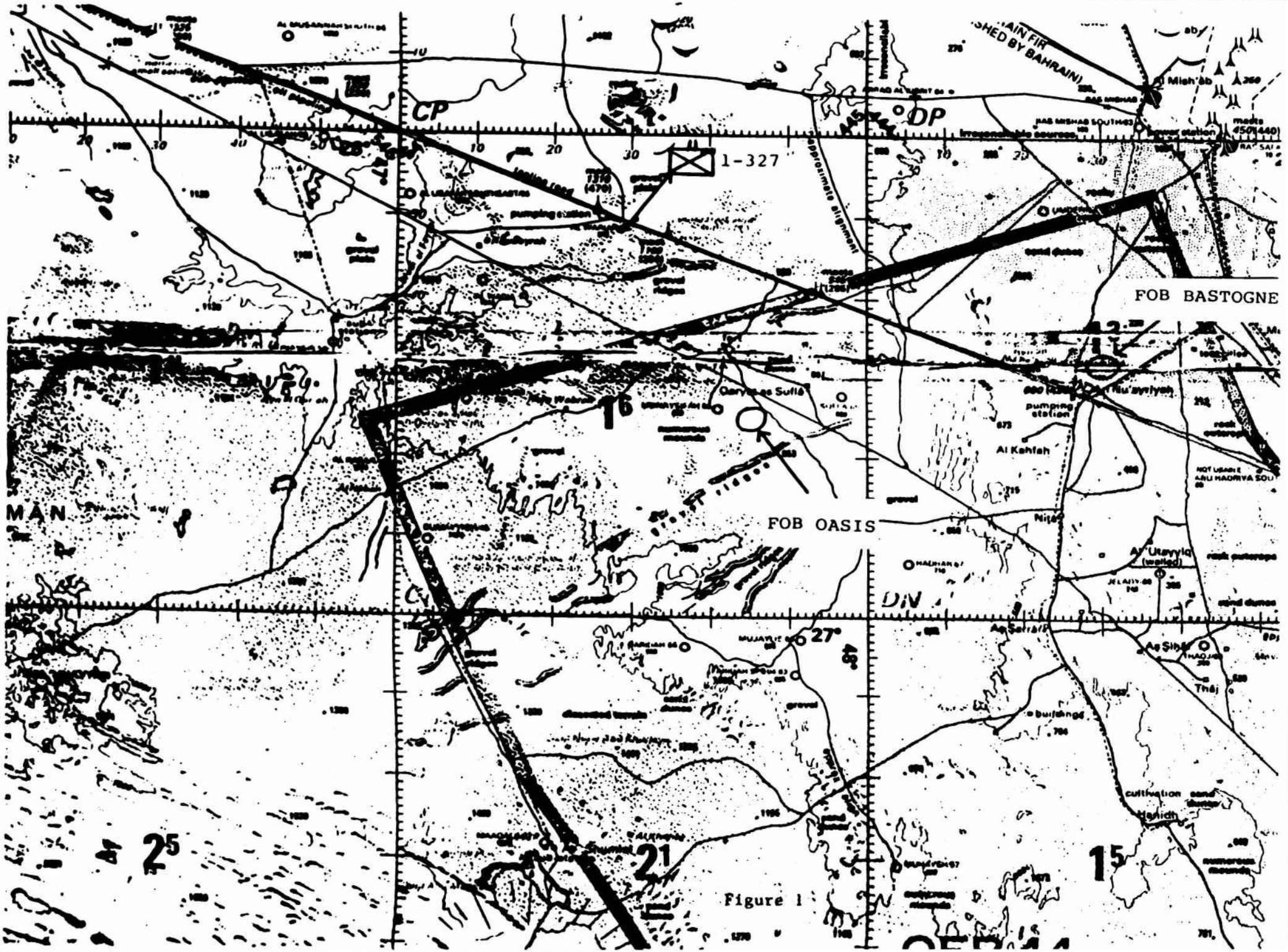

CP
DP
1-327
FOB BASTOGNE
FOB OASIS
Al Kahfah
Mish'ab
Qaryat as Sulib
Nitaq
Ash Shaykh Thaj
Hanich
16
25
21
15
27°

Figure 1

sector which was 20 kilometers wide and 25 kilometers deep. Just the surveillance of the area was difficult for the force structure of an air assault battalion. With our paucity of vehicles, we found our ability to defend this large area limited.

A second challenge was the lack of any armor in our defensive scheme. The closest armor formation was the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment 75 km's to the east and the 24th Infantry Division 80 km's to the south. We were given 6 inflatable M-1 dummy tanks as a deception measure, but we found these were of limited use because we had no real armor force to exploit the deception. Because our sector was the most western unit in the covering force, the lack of an armor force to counter an attack into our exposed left flank was a serious problem.

A third challenge was the barrenness of the terrain we were occupying. The battalion sector was in a desert without water, shade or vegetation. We tried to keep the soldiers as comfortable as possible by bringing pup tents for shade, and providing gravity showers. Despite these efforts, it was still harsh going for everyone throughout our time in the covering force area.

The final challenge was the possible passage of lines with the Saudi brigade to our immediate north. In a liaison meeting with the Saudi brigade commander, he said his unit was going to defend its position and would not fall back thru our defenses. It was my brigade commander's opinion and

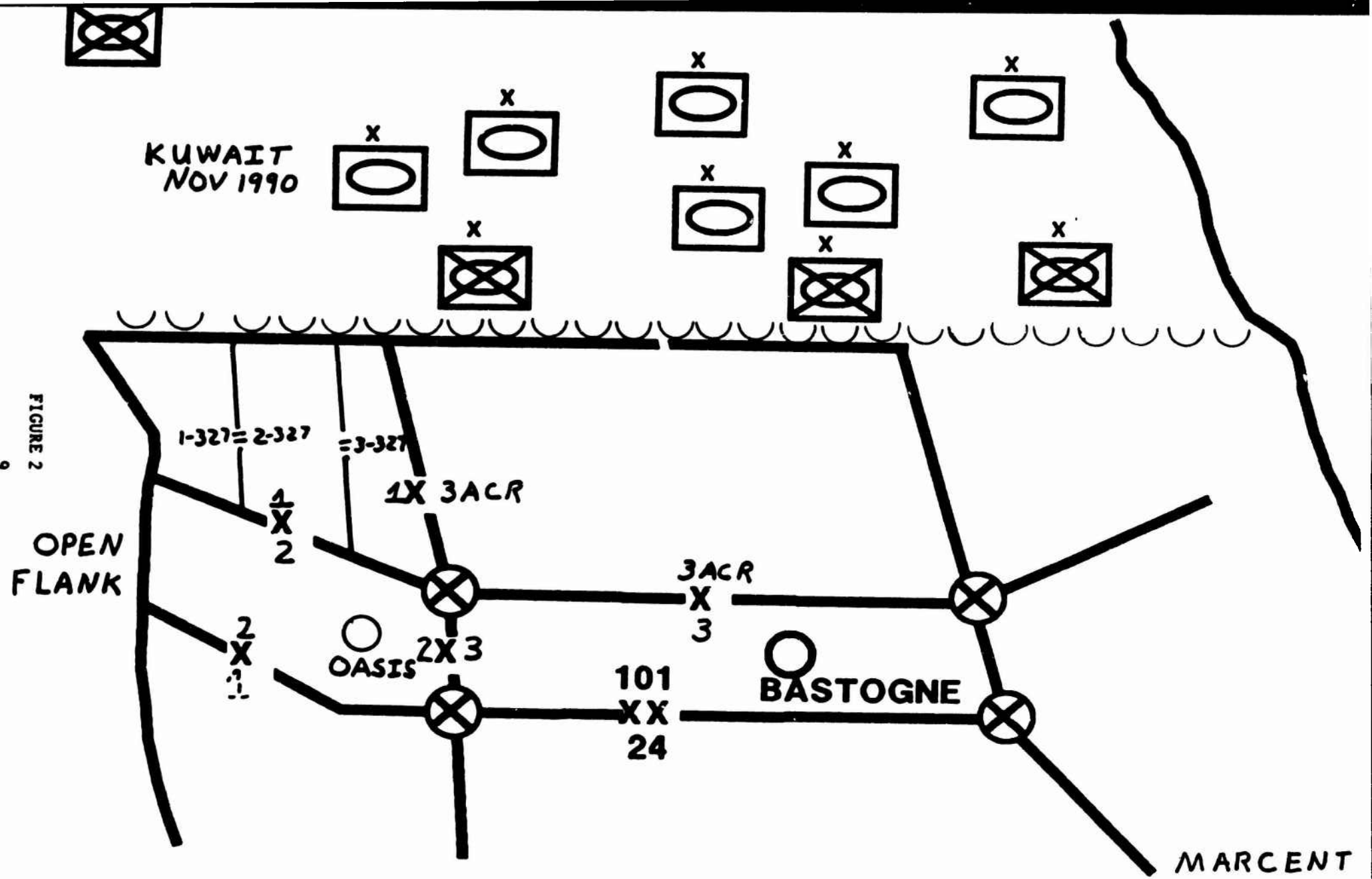

KUWAIT
NOV 1990
1-327= 2-327
=3-327
1X 3ACR
4
X
2
OPEN
FLANK
3ACR
X
3
2
X
1
OASIS
2X 3
101
XX
24
BASTOGNE
MARCENT

FIGURE 2

also mine that an Iraqi attack in November could have punched thru the Saudi lines. How we were going to handle any Saudi retrograde movement was never realisticaly discussed with them and thus never resolved.

Our scheme of maneuver for the covering force was focused around our 20 TOW anti-tank vehicles and the one artillery battery (105) that was in direct support of the battalion. We divided our battalion sector into two sectors and placed a company commander in charge of each sector. Each of the company commanders were given 8 TOW vehicles for their sector while 4 TOWs were held in battalion reserve. We used the rest of our HMMWVs to carry infantry soldiers around to provide close-in protection for the TOW vehicles. TOW vehicle positions were dug by the engineers throughout the two sectors and the company commanders were expected to fight their TOW force through their sector. The remainder of the battalion was put in a battle position at the rear of the battalion sector. After attriting an attacking Iraqi force our unit was to conduct a passage of lines through the 2nd Brigade to our south and then establish another defensive position.

The bottom line for the battalion was that to perform the covering force mission it had to stay mobile. All personnel had to have a dedicated vehicle to move on the battlefield or otherwise they would be cutoff and bypassed. The use of the TOW vehicles to delay back thru our sector was the only feasible option we found to do the mission.

By mid-November the belief that we were going to go on the offensive started to prevail in the battalion. President Bush had just ordered VII Corps to deploy to Saudi Arabia which indicated to us that we were going to war. In addition, the Air Force was receiving additional reinforcements and had just flexed its muscles in Operation Imminent Thunder on 17-18 November. We had been in the desert for over two months and the thought of spending a year or more there waiting for the economic sanctions to work was repugnant at best.

THE PLAN

"You're kidding!"
First words spoken by Major Dempsey after being briefed on the plan to air assault into Iraq

By the last part of November, our Brigade Commander had received from division the initial concept for the attack into Iraq. Because of the sensitivity of the plan, Col Hill briefed only the battalion commanders and then restricted us from releasing it to our subordinates. Under the division's initial plan, code named, "Desert Rendezvous One", the 101st was to launch an assault deep into Iraq, northwest of the Saudi town of Rafha. The 2nd Brigade was to assault the town of As-Samawah and establish a foward operating base there. The 3rd Brigade was to follow the 2nd into As-Samawah and then conduct an assault into An-Nasiriyah in conjunction with 1st Brigade. The assault was aimed at cutting Highway 8, a major thoroughfare that runs through central Iraq

roughly parallel with the Euphrates River. The 2nd Brigade would then move southeast and attack Talil Air Force Base.[5]

After looking closely at this plan, the division and corps planners decided that it was too ambitious.[6]The idea that the division would have to do some heavy fighting in cities was not appealing to anyone. The plan was altered and the following mission was given to the division:

"When directed the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) moves by air and ground to TAA Campbell and prepares for offensive operations commencing G-Day, conducts Air Assault to establish FOB Cobra and attacks to interdict, block and defeat enemy forces operating in and through AO Eagle and on order conducts attacks to the east to assist in the defeat of the RGFC Forces"[7]

This second plan, named "Rendezvous Destiny Two", called for the entire division to move out of the covering force area and back to Camp Eagle II. The division would then move by C-130, helicopter and convoy to TAA Campbell which was 900 kilometers to the west near the Saudi city of Rafha. From TAA Campbell, the divison would stage for its air assault into Iraq.

In the scheme of maneuver, the 1st Brigade would be the lead unit and would be air assaulted 93 Kms into Iraq to set up FOB Cobra. FOB Cobra would be used as a refuel point for the rest of the division in its operations in Iraq. The 2nd Brigade was to follow the 1st Brigade ,on G-Day, into FOB Cobra and then posture itself to assault Talil Airbase. The 3rd Brigade would follow the next day and fly to the Euphrates River Valley and cut Highway 8 (AO Eagle). The

helicopters which took the 3rd Brigade to the Euphrates would then fly back and refuel at FOB Cobra.[8]

MG Peay's intent for Rendezvous Destiny II was as follows:

> Reposition Forces (Safety/OPSEC)
> Conduct aggressive pre G-Day armed reconnaissance
> FOB Cobra must be established rapidly
> Interdict in AO Eagle as combined arms team
> Operations are enemy force oriented
> Success is:
> Defeat ingressing/egressing enemy forces
> Disrupt Iraqi CSS operations
> Deny LOC in Euphrates Valley [9]

The mission that the 101st was to execute was part of what was to be called later by General Schwarzkopf the "Hail Mary" play by the XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps. The mission statement for the XVIII Corps was:

> "On order XVIII Corps attacks to penetrate Iraqi defenses and to interdict Iraqi LOCS along the Euphrates River in order to prevent reinforcement of and escape froom the Kuwaiti theater of operation by Iraqi forces. On order, continues the attack east to assisst in the desstruction of the RGFC."[See Figure 3] [10]

By mid-December, the plan for the assault on FOB Cobra was fairly solid. To validate the concept of the setup of FOB Cobra, the division executed a major CPX/FTX to see if the FOB could be established and operational in one day. The operation went fairly well and it appeared that the concept was valid. From the CPX, the battalion determined the maximum load capacity of the Blackhawk helicopter in the desert environment. We found that the helicopter could carry

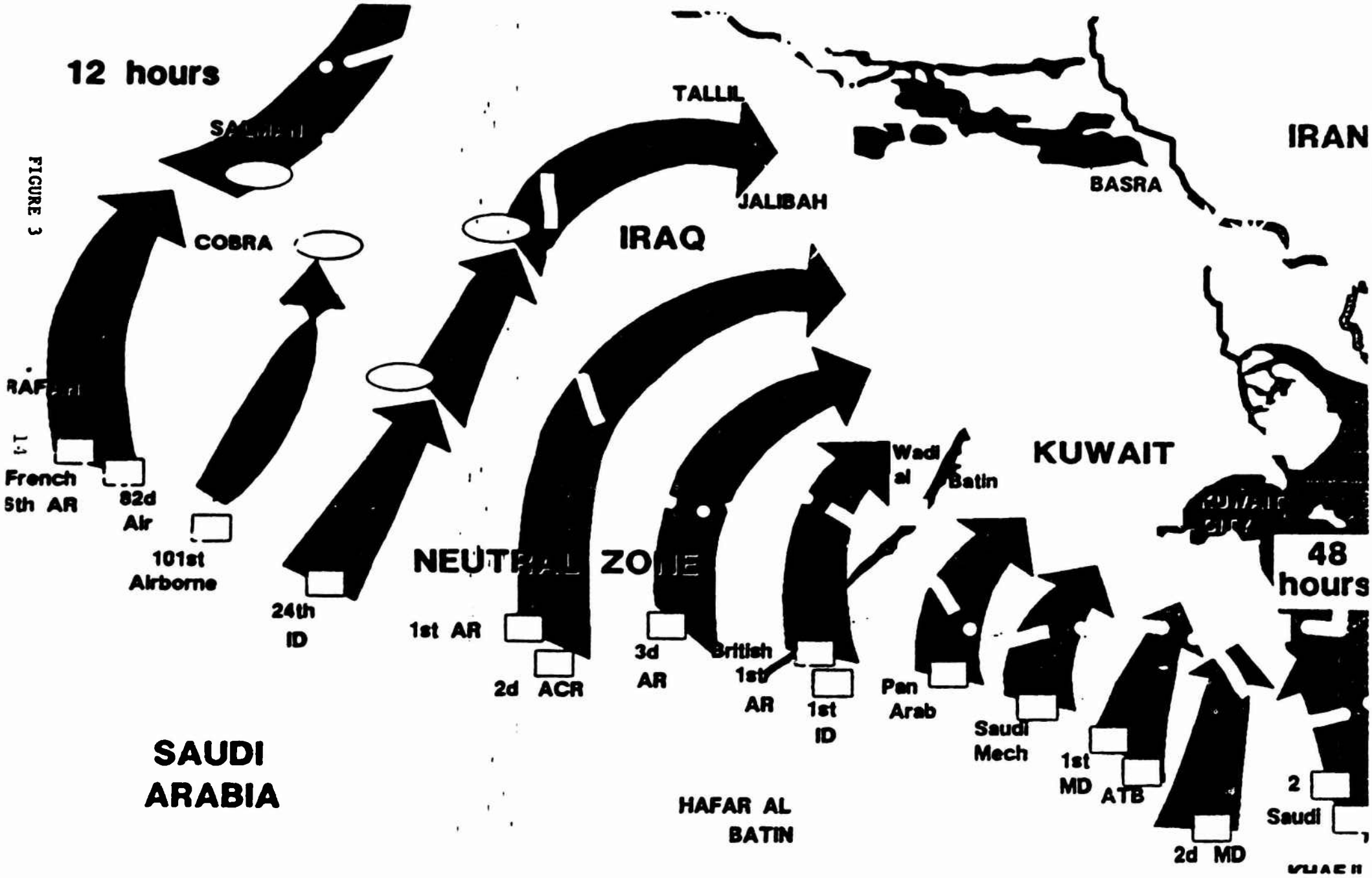

12 hours
TALLIL
IRAN
JALIBAH
BASRA
COBRA
IRAQ
French
5th AR
82d
Air
101st
Airborne
24th
ID
NEUTRAL ZONE
1st AR
2d ACR
3d
AR
British
1st
AR
1st
ID
Wadi
al
Batin
KUWAIT
48
hours
Pan
Arab
Saudi
Mech
1st
MD
ATB
2d MD
2
Saudi
SAUDI
ARABIA
HAFAR AL
BATIN

FIGURE 3

15 fully combat loaded soldiers, along with a kevlar blanket for bottom protection. We also found how much water and overhead protection equipment we could take with us. This data would later be used to determine how many soldiers we could fly into Cobra on G-Day.

On 18 December, the battalion headed back north to its covering force position after a three week stay in the basecamp. At this time, the division had decided to pull the 2nd and 3rd Brigade back into Camp Eagle II and leave only the 1st Brigade in the covering force.[11] While in the covering force area, the battalion continued its defensive mission and began shifting mental gears for the air assault into Iraq.

THE AIR WAR STARTS

"Kick that booty"

CSM Riley on hearing the first wave of aircraft go over the night the air war began

On 16 January, our brigade commander called the battalion commanders together and informed us that the air war would start in the early morning of 17 January. Col Hill was unsure of how long the air campaign was going to last, but he was fairly sure it would last at least two weeks. Col Hill also gave us the order that the brigade would be pulling out of the covering force area on 18 January, one day after the air campaign started. Since my battalion was the furthest west, we would be the last unit to pull out.

After the meeting, I returned to my CP amd told the S3 I wanted to see all the officers at 1600 hours and for each of them to bring an MRE and a bottle of water for a "Desert Dining In". When I had all the officers together I told them what the Brigade Commander had told me about the air war starting that night. Although everyone had anticipated that we were going to war, the stark reality was now setting in. Giving my best "Knute Rockne" speech I told them again what we were fighting for and that I was proud of them. My CSM also gave a fiery speech about leading their men from the front. The meeting broke up after about an hour and I told the officers that they could tell their men we were going to war that night.

At around 0200 hours we heard the first wave of fighters and bombers going overhead. At that time my XO opened a new can of coffee called his "Victory" can and my CSM came in the TOC singing his song called "Kick that Booty". At about 0430 hours we heard over the BBC that Baghdad was being bombed so we knew the first wave had gotten through and that the war had started.

The morning of 17 January was to be punctuated by several exciting events. The first event was watching the second wave of aircraft fly over enroute to Iraq. In one flight were three B-52's escorted by 24 F-15's. To most of us it was a sight we wouldn't quickly forget. The second event was the threat of attack by Iraqi aircraft on our position. Over the brigade command net, we were alerted with

a SKYWATCH codeword which meant inbound enemy aircraft were headed to our location. The incoming aircraft never made it to our position and the alert was cancelled. After the alert was over, I noticed with some amusement the shovels of dirt coming out of everyone's fighting position as we all (including myself) tried to get down another foot or two to mother earth.

The rest of the 17th was spent breaking down our positions and preparing for our pullback to Camp Eagle II. On Tapline Road, which bisected our defensive sector, we could see the increased tempo of VII Corps now moving out to the west. Earlier we had seen the 1st Infantry Division move to the west down Tapline Road and now the 1st Armored Division and the 3d Armored Division were using the two lane highway. Trucks, lowboys with tanks, ammunition and artillery pieces rolled past our positions with no break in the convoy.

On the 18th, we assembled in two areas for busses to pick us up for the movement back to Camp Eagle II. Our movement plan called for six double decker busses to move approximately 500 personnel with the rest of the battalion moving by HMMWV and Five Ton truck. Because we were always short in busses to transport our soldiers, we had come up with an innovative way to load the busses to maximize their space. Our NCO's had found that the most efficient way to load a bus was to put part of the 86 personnel on the top deck of the bus, then load rucksacks on the floor of the

bottom deck and then load the remaining soldiers thru the bottom windows of the bus.

When our busses finally arrived at around 1400 hours on the 18th, we found that we were 1 1/2 busses short as we received 4 double deckers and one regular bus. At this time, my S-4, Cpt Landers, showed great initiative by going out on Tapline road and stopping an empty bus by pulling his HMMWV in front of it and commandeering it to our assembly area. We loaded our troops on the busses and headed south down the 200 miles to Camp Eagle II. Since the battalion was the last 101st unit to pull out of the covering force, we were relatively alone on our side of the road. Of course, on the other side was half of VII Corps going to the northwest making our ride most interesting.

THE DEPLOYMENT TO TACTICAL ASSEMBLY AREA CAMPBELL

" I think your plan is like the movie, you know, " A Bridge Too Far ".

Response of a Captain from the 6 French Division during an exchange visit at TAA Campbell

The battalion returned to Camp Eagle II around midnight on the evening of 18 January. The division by this time was well into preparing for the movement to TAA Campbell. The 2nd Brigade had already moved out of Camp Eagle II on 11 January as they were sent to Hafar Al Batin to reinforce VII Corps. Intelligence estimates had shown that a possible

Iraqi atack was headed toward the Hafar Al Batin basin on 13 January. The 2nd Brigade was attached to the 1st Cavalry Division and given the mission to guard the Al Qayusumah airfield which was 25 kilometers southeast of Hafar Al Batin.[12]

The day after the air war began the division began a massive movement to the northwest in preparation for the ground war. Within seven days, the division moved in ground convoys and C-130 Hercules aircraft about 900 kilometers from Camp Eagle II to TAA Campbell.[13] TAA Campbell was approximately 75 kilometers southeast of the Saudi town of Rafha and 10 kilometers southwest of the Iraqi border. It was from here that the division was to launch its assault into Iraq on G-Day.

My battalion was the last infantry battalion to depart from Camp Eagle II as we closed into TAA Campbell on 25 January. My CSM had gone to TAA Campbell on 18 January as part of a brigade advance party and had our company positions well laid out when we arrived. In TAA Campbell, we were the most western unit in the 101st and had the 6th French Division on our western flank.

During the 28 days we were in TAA Campbell we had to concentrate not only on the upcoming air assault mission but also on the defense of our sector. Since our brigade sector was adjacent to the Iraqi border, we were in a position where we had to be constantly aware of possible Iraqi incursions. Complicating this was an Iraqi border position

that was 1 kilometer north of the brigade border. MG Peay had decided not to take out the border position until right before the ground war began and not to fire any artillery into our sector as we were still trying to deceive the Iraqis concerning how large a unit they were facing. To screen the Iraqi position, the brigade kept one infantry company on patrol directly in front of the area.

While we were in TAA Campbell, the battalion was subject to a few moments of enemy fire and movement. On 13 February our mortar platoon received about 4 to 6 rounds of enemy mortar fire. Around this time the 3rd Brigade, which was adjacent to our brigade, reported enemy armor movement near their sector. Needless to say, the mortar fire and possible enemy armor movement did nothing to lessen the tension.

By the first part of February the plan for the air assault to seize FOB Cobra was solidified. The 1st Brigade (1-327 Inf, 2-327 Inf, 3-327 Inf, 1-502 Inf, and 2-320 Artillery) was to air assault 90 kilometers into Iraq to seize FOB Cobra on the early morning of G-Day. The 1st Brigade would be given two lifts of 67 Blackhawks, 30 Chinooks and 10 UH-1 Hueys to do the mission.[14] On the afternoon of G-Day, the 2nd Brigade (-) was to fly in to a secure FOB Cobra. The elements of the 1st and 2nd Brigade's which did not participate in the air assault, along with DISCOM, would drive into Iraq by way of an MSR called New Market and would link up with the assault units on G+1. The

MSR would be cleared by a composite 1st Brigade unit called Task Force Citadel. On G+1, the 3rd Brigade was to air assault all of its three infantry battalions into three landing zones, called AO Eagle, which were just south of the Euphrates near the town of Al Khidr. [See Figure 4]

Securing FOB Cobra was the key to the division's plan.[15] Without the refuel point, helicopters carrying the 3rd Brigade to its objective- Highway 8, connecting Baghdad with the Iraqi forces in theater- would run out of fuel long before they returned to home base at TAA Campbell. FOB Cobra had to be secure and operational before the 3rd Brigade could launch on G+1.

The battalion's mission was to seize the northwestern part of FOB Cobra which was about 40 square kilometers in area. Additionally, we were expected to conduct a linkup with the 6th French Division on our west flank on G+2. For the air assault, the battalion was given two lifts of 24 Blackhawk helicopters and 2 lifts of 6 Chinooks to bring in its troops, vehicles and equipment. The remainder of its equipment and vehicles would come up MSR New Market with Task Force Citadel.

To prepare for the air assault, the battalion tried to concentrate on: (1) Making sure that all the troops were well informed and prepared for the air assault; (2) Ensuring that the intelligence picture of the landing area was as clear as possible; (3) Making sure that all the leaders

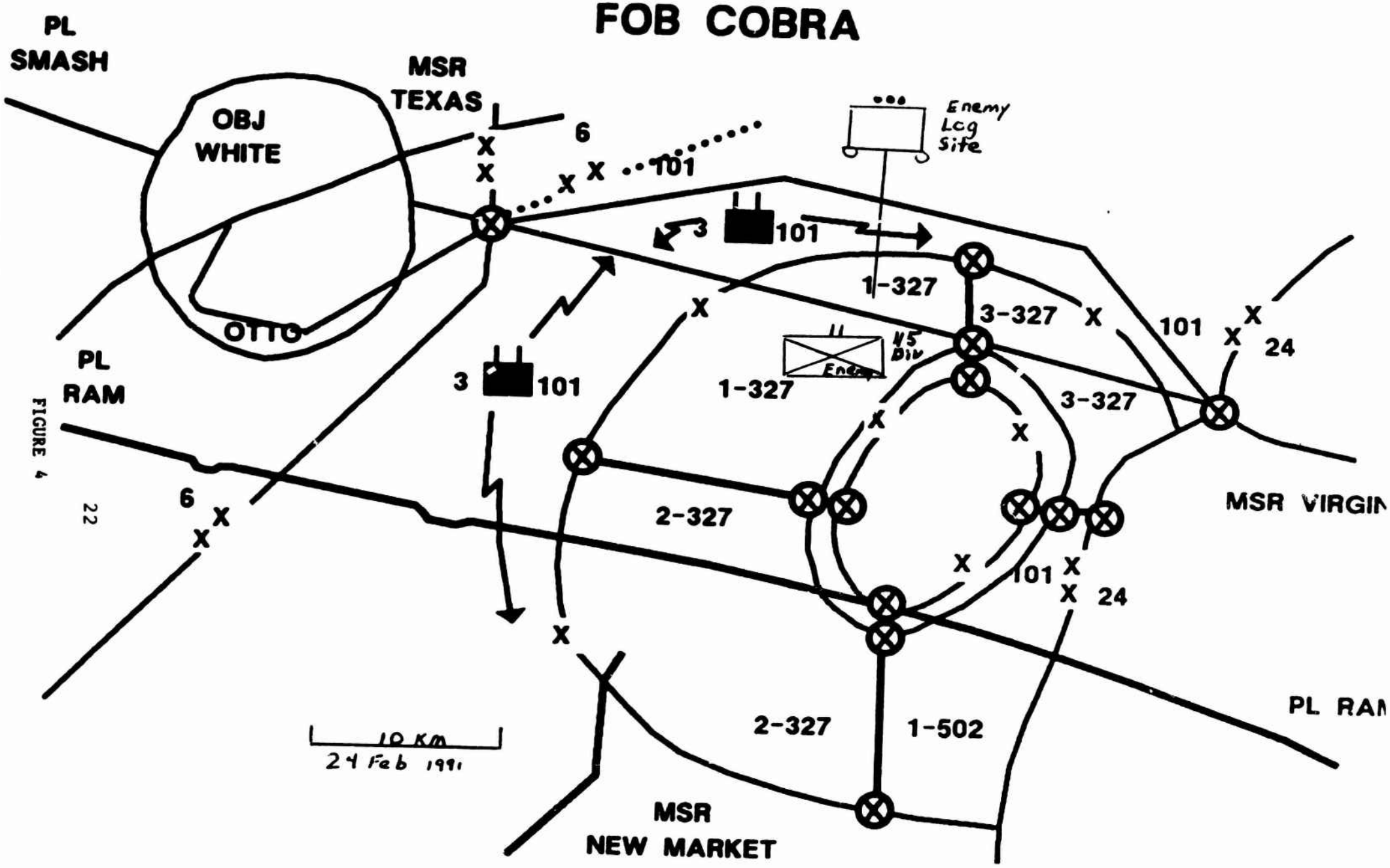

FOB COBRA
PL SMASH
MSR TEXAS
OBJ WHITE
OTTO
PL RAM
Enemy Log Site
101
3
1-327
3-327
V5 Div
Engr
24
2-327
MSR VIRGIN
1-502
PL RAM
10 KM
24 Feb 1991
MSR NEW MARKET

FIGURE 4

understood the plan and the contingencies if something went wrong.

To keep the troops well informed, I personally tried to talk to the troops at least every other day. Because our positions were spread out over an eight kilometer line, I would talk to individual platoons one at a time. At the talks, I would update everyone on the enemy strength in our landing area, talk through the overall plan, answer any questions or rumors and tell them again how proud I was of them. Of particular interest to the troops was the timing of the air assault. On G-day, the overall plan called for only the 101st and the 6th French Division to attack into Iraq. The remainder of XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps would not attack until G+1. The fact that we would be 90 kilometers inside Iraq and waiting for units to link up on G+2 was something that I had to convince the soldiers was doable. As always, I took CSM Riley with me to help me keep the soldiers motivated and answer questions.

In preparing the soldiers for the mission, we rehearsed the air assault and practiced the numerous tasks that we would have to accomplish once we landed. In particular, we practiced unloading the Blackhawks with our equipment, ensured that the Blackhawks could lift the fifteen combat loaded infantrymen (we were close to weighing out the helicopters), ensured that the Chinooks could lift our vehicles and made sure that our communications would work over the extended frontage we would have in FOB Cobra. We

also worked hard on the soldier's load, but were not successful in getting it under 100 pounds per man. The battalion ultimately did three fullscale rehearsals, numerous TEWTs, one brigade rehearsal and an exchange visit with the French division to help prepare the soldiers.

Perhaps the most important part of preparing for the air assault was getting a good intelligence picture of our landing area. From the intelligence reports, we believed that there was one Iraqi Division, the 45th, in the area that comprised the 6th French zone and the 101st sector around FOB Cobra. The 45th was an infantry division and did have some towed artillery and a tank battalion in its order of battle. Both the artillery pieces and the tank battalion were being targeted by the Air Force and attrited while we were in TAA Campbell. The division did not seem to possess any capability for offensive chemical action.

Inside FOB Cobra, division intelligence estimates said there were two possible enemy locations and both were in my sector. One was an occupied logistical site that appeared to have 15 to 30 people. The logistical site was in the very northern part of my zone and about six kilometers from my most northern landing zone. The second area was a reported "unoccupied" trench line that could possibly hold up to 100 enemy soldiers. The trench line was about 500 meters from the landing zone of my lead company.

In looking at the estimates, my S2 section, Cpt Delgado and Sgt Gonzalez, brought up the point that the Iraqis would

not have constructed the trench line without some plan of occupying it. They urged me to change the landing zone of my northern company, A Company, and move it about 4500 meters to the south. My S3 and XO agreed, so I went to the brigade commander with my recommendation to move the landing zone. Initially Col Hill was not prepared to move the LZ because it was very close to where the aviation brigade was planning to establish a refuel point. Col Hill thought it would cost us time to move that extra distance and additionally he had been assured that there was no one in the trench line by reconnaissance flights of the aviation brigade. After a day, Col Hill relented and said we could move the LZ 4500 meters further south. This was to prove extremely important during the assault on the FOB.

In preparing the officers for the air assault, I concentrated on ensuring that each of them knew how I wanted to synchronize the battle and why I was doing it that way. In talking to the officers, I emphasized the firepower that we were taking in with us; mortars, TOW missiles, 105 artillery, attack helicopters and tactical air support would all be available to us. I told the officers that if we ran into trouble, I wanted them to use all of our firepower before we tried to take some position by ground attack. This would minimize our losses and would maximize our capability to put accurate and mass fires on a target.

In using the firepower that we had however, I told the officers we had to concentrate on not having fratricidal

fire. There would be many moving parts during the assault (Blackhawks, Apaches, CAS, Artillery, Chinooks,Infantry soldiers) and I didn't want us to kill each other. When we finally assaulted into Cobra, the emphasis on using combined fire while avoiding fratricidal fire was to pay big dividends.

THE AIR ASSAULT INTO IRAQ

"Sir there's no enemy in Cobra "

1st Brigade S-2's last intel update to Ltc Hancock

"Binnie you're about to make air assault history. Don't fuck it up!"

LTG Luck's, Commander of XVIII Airborne Corps, reported last words to MG Peay.

As 20 February arrived it seemed inevitable that the ground attack on Iraq and Kuwait was going to go forward. The Iraqis seemed as intransigent as ever and President Bush and the coalition completely united. From our perspective, the battalion was as ready as it would get. We had rehearsed and then rehearsed again. We were confident that we could get into FOB Cobra, secure it, and hold on until we were relieved.

On the night of 22 February, an MLRS unit of XVIII Corps came forward to about 500 meters of our CP and fired several salvoes of rockets into Iraq. After being rocked in my sleeping bag, I realized that our time in Saudi Arabia

was drawing to a close. On the morning of 23 February, the battalion broke down its equipment and tents and headed out to its pickup zones. The UH-60 Blackhawks and the CH-47 Chinooks were prepositioned on the morning of the 23rd in preparation for the assault on the 24th. The companies walked out to their pickup zones (which were close to the company positions) and linked up with their helicopters. The battalion elements that were going with the ground convoy also linked up with the Task Force Citadel personnel. My XO, Major Chappel, would head our contingent of some 250 soldiers and 58 vehicles in the convoy.

During the day, the companies went over last minute preparations and practiced their unloading procedures off the helicopters. Each of the helicopters did a power check to make sure that they weren't overloaded. The final load on each of the UH -60's was: 15 combat loaded soldiers with rucksacks, three 5-gallon water cans for a one day resupply of water, eight 4 by 4 sheets of plywood for overhead cover, eight long pickets for overhead cover, 50 sandbags per person for overhead cover, and 4 picks/shovels for digging. The Chinooks were to carry internally two HMMWVS and crew on the first lift and two vehicles slingloaded on the second lift. Eight of the eleven HMMWVS were TOW vehicles, one was a medical evacuation vehicle, and two were command and control vehicles. We had also constructed six man pull carts for ammunition resupply that went on the second lift of Chinooks.

On the 23rd, I attended one last coordination meeting at the Brigade TOC. At the meeting were all the infantry, artillery, suppport and aviation battalion commanders that would take part in the seizure of FOB Cobra. At the meeting, Col Hill went over again the timing of the air assault, the communication lash-up and the expected arrival of Task Force Citadel on G+1. The S-2 went over the latest intelligence estimates and said that in his opinion there were no enemy forces in Cobra. The S-2 had also received a large aerial photo of Cobra that we went over, but unfortunately it's information was over a month old.

After the meeting had broken up, I returned to the battalion area and went to see the company commanders one more time. Each of the commanders seemed optimistic and I wished them well for the next day's mission. The troops were enthusiastic and wished me and the CSM good luck.

That evening we sat by our helicopters and mentally prepared ourselves for the morning liftoff. At that time, I felt the battalion had done as much as it could to get ready for the mission and I personally was ready to get on with it. Our scheduled lift-off time was 0525 hours so I went to sleep around 2200 hours. The 6th French Division was to kickoff their attack off around 0400 hours so they started to fire artillery around 0100 hours. The French artillery units were 6 kilometers from our pickup zones and provided us a serenade throughout the night.

After we were awakened at 0330 hours, we loaded our rucksacks and waited for the liftoff. Around 0430 hours we received notice that the PZ time had been moved back one hour because of bad weather. This was not a good omen, because we would now be landing in daylight. The flight time was 55 minutes and we had planned on landing at 0625 hours which was just before daylight. At around 0600 hours we received word that the liftoff would be delayed further until 0725 hours because the weather was still too bad.

At 0700 hours we received final word that the mission was a go. We loaded the helicopters and waited for the liftoff. At 0725 hours the Blackhawks started to hover and then we were off. Looking out on the ground we could see the troops that were coming on the second lift yelling at us and giving us the thumbs up. We could also see out the window the fifty some odd helicopters that were carrying the other three battalions backed up behind us. All in all it was a very impressive and moving moment.

Within five minutes of flight, we were in Iraqi airspace. Our altitude was about 20 meters off the ground because we were trying to evade radar and any hand held SAMs. The lowness of the altitude made the flight very close to a carnival ride. The flight was uneventful and we reached the landing zone with no incidences. During the flight, I had heard no reports of any problems at the LZ and expected to move quickly into our perimeter.

Upon landing, we exited the aircraft and held our equipment down as the Blackhawks left the area. When the Blackhawks had gone, the first sound we heard was gunfire coming from the battalion's northern sector, which was my A Company. The gunfire sounded like a heavy machine gun (that I had never heard before) mixed with the fire of the 30 mm of an Apache attack helicopter. This sound was obviously not what I had expected when we landed.

After securing our gear, my TAC moved about 300 meters from the landing zone and set up our radios. My first call was to my S-3 who was with A Company in the north. He said that he saw the Apache helicopters, who had preceded us into the area, firing at something on the trenchline that we had been told was unoccupied. He said he couldn't see exactly what they were firing at, but said he and the A Company Commander (Cpt Russell) would displace closer to the trench line to get a better look.

I called my two other company commanders, B Company (Cpt Simril) and C Company (Cpt Brewer) and they both said they had no enemy in their area and that all their personnel had gotten in with no problems. Finally, I called the Brigade TAC, Major Clawson, who had flown in and told him that we had landed, but had contact in the northern sector. He told me in return that the Apaches who were covering that trench line had reported one helicopter had been hit and had to land. I called the C and B Company commanders back and told them to move their troops out to their designated

areas, which were about one kilometer from the LZs, and setup their perimeter.

After landing, for 30 minutes, I was unable to talk to the Apache unit, 1-101, that was guarding our northern flank and firing on the trench line. We could not raise it either on their frequency or on our battalion frequency which they were to monitor. At around 0800 hours, the Apache unit began to turn the battle over to the 3-101, a Cobra unit, which was taking over the guard mission. The air battle captain, Cpt Jones, came up on the battalion net and reported that there were enemy soldiers in the trench line and in the logistic's site across the highway.

Around 0815 hours, my Air Force liaison officer,Cpt Reister, said that he had contacted two F-16's and that they were in bound to our location. I called the air battle captain and told him that I wanted to hit the logistic site that was across the highway and for him to clear the area. The logistic site was about six kilometers from my A Company and was easily identifiable from the air because it was near the highway and had the only trees in the area around it. Cpt Jones had the Cobras move out of the area and my ALO then brought the F-16's in. When the F-16's arrived, they identified the target and then each dropped one two thousand pound bomb. The air battle captain monitored the strike and said both bombs hit inside the logistic site.

After the air strike, Cpt Jones flew to my CP and we talked over how we were going to continue to attack the

enemy. Cpt Jones said it looked like the trench line was occupied and stretched for about three kilometers. He said there were also two vehicles and some personnel in the logisitic site. I told him that an artillery battery had landed by Chinooks and was moving up to support us. After discussing our options, I told him that we would alternate using his gunships and artillery to hit the trench line and the logistic site. I told him that I wanted him to call the artillery strikes back to me and that my FSO would relay the data to the battery. At this time, my A Company still could not see the enemy in the trench line and was unable to call in the artillery. When we were finished, I patted Cpt Jones on the back, told him he was doing a great job and told him not to get shot down.

Around 0900 hours the artillery battery, C/-320 FA, had moved into position and Cpt Jones started the calls for fires. He passed the calls to me over the battalion command net and I would give the info to Cpt Hawkins, the FSO, who called the information into the battery. Although this was a little awkward, it was the best way at the time to get the calls for fires executed. After we had fired one mission on the logistic site and then one mission on the trench line, Cpt Jones brought back his Cobras and started to fire on the trench line again.

About 0930 hours my second lift of troops and vehicles started to come in. The only problem with the second lift was the vehicle lift of Chinooks. The Chinook lift, for

reasons I was never able to ascertain, put my TOW vehicles 8 kilometers from their LZ. The LZ was 500 meters from my position so when Cpt Gill, the company commander, said he had landed I knew that something was wrong. Cpt Gill got his navigational aid out, found his position and then headed to our location.

By this time, Cpt Russell, his fire support officer and Major Dempsey had worked their way to where they could oversee the trench line. Major Dempsey said they could see the trench line clearly and wanted the fire support officer to start calling in the fire support missions. Using their navigational aid and a laser range finder, they brought the artillery fire in more accurately than when Cpt Jones and I were calling in the fire.

Around 1000 hours, my ALO had contacted two A-10's who said they had 500 pound bombs and cluster bombs and were coming to our location. I told my ALO to tell them that we wanted the 500 Lb bombs but not the cluster bombs. We contacted Cpt Jones and told him to guide in the two A-10's, because we were going to drop the bombs on the trenchline near our troops. After the A-10 strike and two more fire missions of artillery, my S-3 said that he saw white flags from the trench line. This was fortunate as we had only six more rounds of 105mm left to fire.

THE SURRENDER

> "If there is any more firing from your troops there will be dire consequences- starting with you."
>
> Cpt Gill giving instructions to a captured Iraqi Battalion Commander

> "You tell this son-of-a-bitch that he better surrender everyone or I'll bring the aircraft back and bomb them again."
>
> Ltc Hancock giving instructions to an interpreter on what to tell a captured Iraqi Battalion Commander

At the time of the surrender, my closest unit to the trench line was my scout platoon who had moved to within 2 kilometers. Since the scouts were still a good distance away from the trench line, I called Cpt Gill, the D Company Commander, and told him to load the scouts on his TOW HMMWVS and ride forward to accept the surrender. After putting as many of the scouts on his HMMWVS as possible, Cpt Gill went forward to accept the surrender.

At the trench line an Iraqi major came out and said that he wanted to surrender his command. During this time there were some shots fired out that were either from the Iraqis or the Cobras that were supporting us. Cpt Gill told the Iraqi major that there should be no more firing or there were going to be serious consequences. The scout platoon began to organize the prisoners who were coming out of their holes and bunkers and Cpt Gill radioed back that he had an

Iraqi battalion commander under his control. About this time, Col Hill landed and I appraised him of the situation. Col Hill listened to my appreciation of the situation and then gave me a UH-1 helicopter to help me get around the battlefield. After Col Hill left, I took the UH-1 forward to assess what was going on at the trench line.

When I landed I was taken to where the Iraqi battalion commander was being held. This was a new experience for me as I wasn't exactly sure how to act- magnanamous or like a mean bastard. Since I was sure that we had not captured all the Iraqis in the area, I chose the latter demeanor.

After telling the battalion commander that I wanted all the Iraqis in the area to surrender, he agreed to go over to the logistic site where we hoped to get the remaining Iraqi personnel to surrender. Major Dempsey had arrived at the trench line and recommended that he take the battalion commander in a HMMWV and go to the logistic site to talk the Iraqis into surrendering. At this time, the situation was further confused as the Cobras were ordered out of the area to prevent an Iraqi tank counterattack that was supposedly forming further to the west. I told Major Dempsey that we would use the UH-1 I was in to cover him since the Iraqis had seen so many different types of helicopters that day they would also believe the UH-1 was an attack helicopter.

Major Dempsey arrived at the logistic site and found the Iraqi soldiers more than willing to surrender. I landed in the helicopter and found we had 15 prisoners. We loaded

four of the prisoners in the UH-1 and put the other prisoners in and on the two HMMWVS and headed back to the trench line.

When we arrived back at the trench line, the 3rd Platoon of A Company had arrived and, along with the scout platoon, was processing the prisoners. The total number of prisoners was 375. Of these, about 25 appeared disoriented from the artillery and close air strikes and were laying on the ground. Six of the prisoners were wounded and had to be evacuated, which we did with the UH-1.

In a quick interrogation of the battalion commander, we found that the unit was the reserve battalion of the 45th Division and that it had fought in the Iran-Iraq war. Its mission was to be a blocking force that would cut the highway that ran behind the trench line. The commander said he had been briefed that a French force was in front of him and that when the ground war started he would have 4 days to get ready for the attack. He said he couldn't believe how fast and quickly our force moved and that he surrendered because he believed his responsibility was more to bring home Iraq's sons than to do Sadaam's work.[16]

After consolidating, we marched the 375 prisoners south 4 km's and kept them until the next day when we turned them over to the MP's. The total count of men and equipment in the bunker complex was: 375 prisoners, 775 RPG rounds, 600 rifles, 20 machine guns of different types, 31 9mm pistols,

four S-60 anti-aircraft guns, eight mortars, eight tons of ammunition, and $5,000 worth of Iraqi money.

The remaining three days of Desert Storm the battalion made a linkup with the 82nd, which passed through the French on our left flank, and destroyed other smaller bunkers (around 15 in all) that we found in our perimeter. The battalion continued to secure FOB Cobra until 25 March and then moved back to Camp Eagle. The battalion redeployed back to Ft Campbell on 10 April 91.

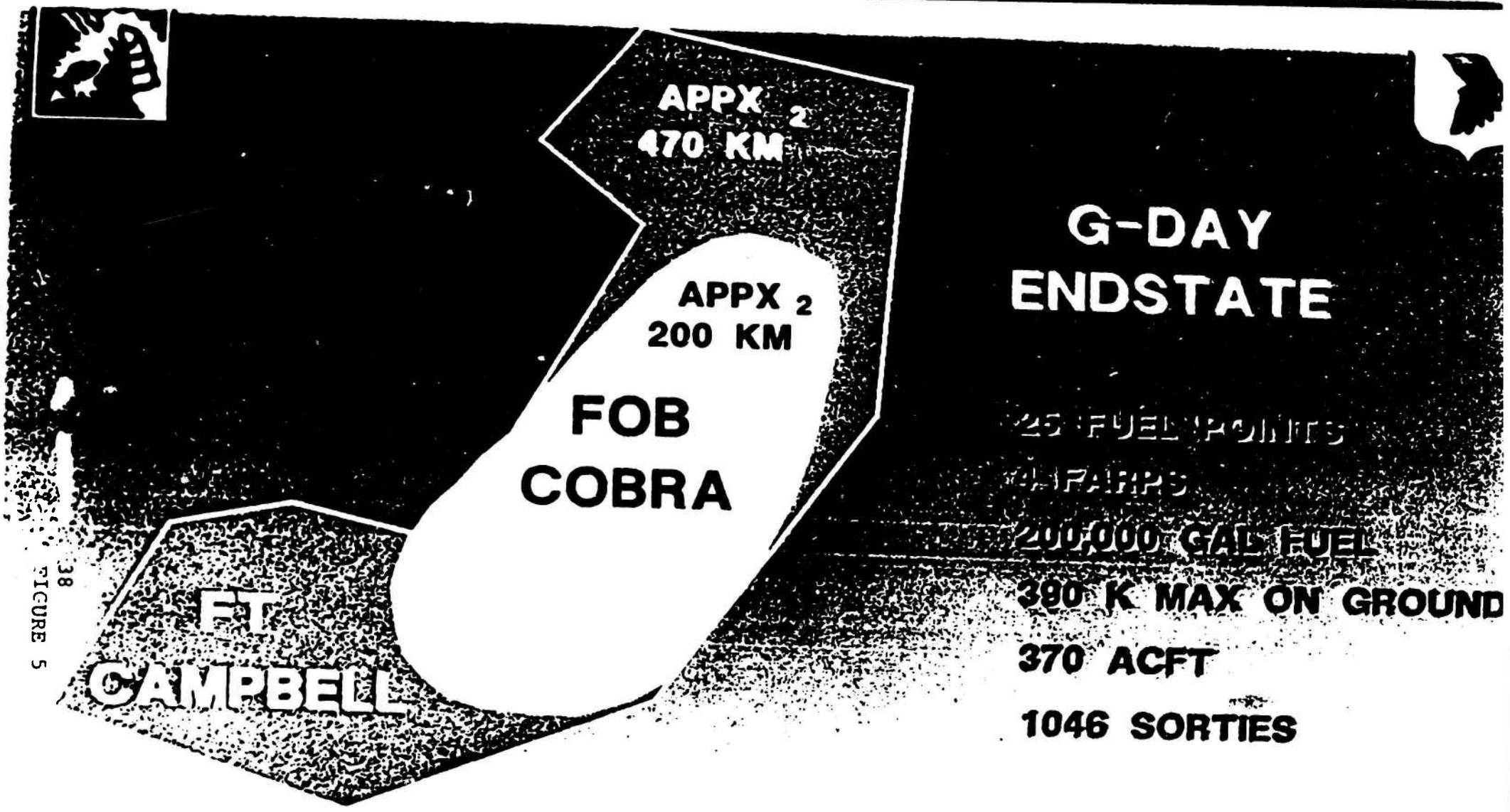


FIGURE 5

38

A0704 SS
91D31 063 27

DEEP OPERATIONS AND THE AIR ASSAULT INTO IRAQ

> "Deep operations must be synchronized with the scheme of maneuver. Deep operations support tactical offensive operations by isolating the battlefield from reinforcing or counter-attacking reserves, disrupting the enemy's combined arms cooperation and operational command and control, and destroying or degrading his sustaining support... The primary tools of deep operations are- tactical air support, long-range artillery, attack helicopter units, electronic warfare systems, special forces, ranger units, air assault units, airborne units, armored and mechanized units. Separately or in combination, these means can block the reinforcement of the enemy defenses..."[17]
>
> FM 100-5

> "As a key subelement of our AirLand Battle doctrine, deep operations are an integral part of all our planning and operations... The integration of deep operations is essential to the big win."[18]
>
> Lieutenant General Crosbie E. Saint
> III Corps Commander
> July 1988

Doctrine provides a template for action on the battlefield. Through doctrinal guidelines Army units are capable of conducting concerted, synchronized and harmonious actions on the battlefield.[19] One of the integral parts of AirLand Battle doctrine is the concept of deep operations. This point is highlighted in FM 100-5, the Army's keystone warfighting manual, where deep operations is considered one of the five key elements of an offensive operation.[20] When the 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) air assaulted into Iraq on 24 and 25 February 1991, the Army was following its doctrine on deep operations as it attempted to cut the lines

of communication of the Iraqi forces in eastern Iraq. How well did the Army follow its doctrine and is the doctrine viable? In this section I will try to answer these two questions.

In analyzing the air assault into Iraq, I will use three criteria to see if the attack followed Army doctrine for deep operations. The first criteria is that the deep operation must be synchronized with the main attack. The synchronization of time and space is necessary to prevent deep operation units from getting surrounded and defeated by reinforcing enemy units. The time that a deep operation unit has to execute a mission must not be of such duration as to allow the enemy to concentrate. This concept is especially critical for light infantry and artillery units that are easily out flanked and overwhelmed by armored forces.

The CENTCOM plan for the ground war called for the 101st's air assault to commence with the 6th French Division's ground attack toward Al Salman. These two divisions were the only two units scheduled to attack into Iraq on 24 February. The remainder of XVIII Airborne Corps and all of VII Corps were scheduled to attack into Iraq on 25 February. The 3rd Brigade of the 101st was also to air assault on 25 February to cut Highway 8. The final CENTCOM plan was slightly modified as the XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps were ordered to attack 12 hours earlier because of lighter than expected resistance.

In analyzing the air assault, I believe the synchronization of the attack was well thought out and executed. The 24th Infantry Division linked-up with the units in FOB Cobra on 25 February while the French/82nd Airborne linked-up on 26 February. During the time before the link-up, the forces in FOB Cobra were never in any danger of being surrounded or defeated by reinforcing Iraqi units. Intelligence estimates accurately predicted that there were no armored or artillery forces that could engage the units in Cobra while they waited for link-up. The intelligence estimates were also correct about the Iraqi capabilities in the area where the 3rd Brigade attacked. The 3rd Brigade linked-up with the 24th Infantry Division on 26 February and also was never threatened enemy reinforcements.

The second criteria for a deep operation is that it must support the main attack. The mission given to the 101st was to interdict the Iraqi lines communication along Highway 8 and to attack enemy forces in its zone of operations. I believe this mission fully supported the main attack by VII Corps. The cutting of Highway 8 forced the Iraqi Army to have to fight in two directions. The physical and psychological effect on the Iraqis, of having American forces raiding in their rear area, diverted the focus of the Iraqi defense and certainly helped the main attack by VII Corps. This point is highlighted by the Iraqi declaration, on 25 February, that they had destroyed many American paratroopers in their rear area.[21]

The third criteria for a deep operation is that the force inserted must be capable of accomplishing the mission. In the air assault, a combination of light infantry, attack helicopters, light artillery (105 mm), tactical air support, and anti-tank weapons were projected to interdict the enemy. I believe this combination was the correct mix of units to do the deep operation. Without this mix of units and capabilities, the 101st would not have been able to accomplish the mission as well as it did. Without artillery, attack helicopters and tactical air suppport, FOB Cobra would not have been secured as quickly as it was. Additionally, the concept of extending the attack radius of Apache helicopters, by basing them in the enemy's rear, was made possible by the security provided by infantry and artillery soldiers.

The air assault into Iraq followed Army doctrine on deep operations and was a very successful mission. The planning, force package and execution all complied with the doctrinal tenets in FM 100-5.

The second question to be answered is whether or not the doctrine on deep operations is viable. In looking at the sucess of the air assaults into Iraq, I believe the doctrine used was and remains viable. The success of the air assaults show that deep operations can be executed on the high intensive, modern battlefield. In the air assaults to seize FOB Cobra and place the 3rd Brigade on the Euphrates, the planning and the execution were well done and followed the

blueprint of FM 100-5. The use of deep operations in future battles will require the same amount of meticulous planning and should continue to follow the doctrine in FM 100-5.

CONCLUSION

" A classic operation"

LTG Luck describing the
takedown of the bunker complex
26 Feb 1991

"The Division could not have reached the Euphrates without this battalion capturing the bunker complex."

MG Peay talking to the battalion
while it was in Iraq
March 1991

In looking back at Desert Shield and Desert Storm, there are several points I think are worth noting. The first point is that the morale of the soldier is a fragile entity that must be continually nurtured. Commanders must take every opportunity to improve the lot of the soldier and make him believe that his cause is noble and that he is cared for and appreciated. Soldiers will sleep on the desert floor and spend endless hours in fly infested holes if they believe what they are doing is contributing to the mission. If they think they have been forgotten about or are being used, their morale will suffer and their performance will deteriorate. This issue is especially important when the validity of the mission is openly doubted as it was in October and November 1991 by members of Congress and the media. Of all the lessons we learned in the desert, nothing came across clearer than the importance of maintaining morale.

A second lesson worth noting is the relationship between the intelligence estimate and the commander. Commanders must judge the intelligence estimate and make the final decision how it influences his part of the battle. In the air assault, the battalion avoided casualties by interpreting the intelligence estimate and moving its northern LZ. If the commander leaves the interpretation of intelligence to his higher headquarters, then he risks them not picking up on indicators that influences his area of the battle.

A third point worth noting is the present quality of the NCO Corps. During the past ten years, one of the most important areas that the Army concentrated on was the rejuvenation of the NCO Corps. Throughout our deployment, the payback on this investment showed as the NCO's performed superbly. Their knowledge, discipline and positive leadership were instrumental in the battalion operating and surviving in the harsh desert environment. Commanders must be cognizant of the quality of their NCO's and give them the responsibility and the authority that they deserve.

The fourth point is the validation of the Army's doctrine on deep operations. The use, in deep operations, of air assault units, attack helicopters, artillery units, and tactical air support was highly productive. The success of the 101st during Desert Storm proved that deep operations are an integral element of AirLand Battle doctrine.

The final point I would like to highlight is the need for the commander to have trust and confidence in his soldiers and officers. Desert Shield and Desert Storm showed that commanders cannot do everything and be everywhere. Commanders must depend on their subordinates to make decisions and execute plans without the commander holding their hand. The more the commander allows his subordinates to think for themselves and operate from the ball and chain of "micro-managed training" then the better off the unit will be during combat.

APPENDIX A

ACRONYMS

AASLT- Air Assault (Transported by helicopter)
ALO- Air Liaison Officer
AO- Assembly Area
BBC- British Broadcasting Corporation
CAS- Close Air Support
CENTCOM- Central Command
CH-47- Utility helicopter capable of carrying 33 soldiers
CPX- Command Post Exercise
CSM- Commmand Sergeant Major
DISCOM- Division Support Command
FOB- Forward Operating Base
FSO- Fire Support Officer
G-DAY- Ground War Day
HMMWV- Utility vehicle carrying 2-4 soldiers and cargo
LOCS- Lines of Comunication
MLRS- Multiple Launched Rocket System
MRE- Meal Ready to Eat
MSR- Major Supply Route
NBC- Nuclear, Biological, Chemical
NCO- Non Commissioned Officer
OPSEC- Operation Security
RGFC- Republican Guard Force
RPG- Rocket Propelled Grenade
TAA- Tactical Assembly Area
TAC- A smaller version of a TOC
TACAIR- Tactical Air Support
TEWT- Tactical Exercise Without Troops
TOC- Tactical Operating Center
TOW- Heavy anti-tank weapon; range 3,750 meters
UH-1- Utility helicopter capable of carrying 7 soldiers
UH-60- Utility helicopter capable of carrying 15 soldiers
XO- Executive Officer

ENDNOTES

1. 101st Airborne Division (AASLT). Reproduction Briefing Charts/Slides on Desert Shield/Storm. (1991).

2. 101st Airborne Division (AASLT). "Lessons Learned From Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm," (1991), 2.

3. Edward M. Flanagan, "The 100-Hour War," Army (April 1991), 26.

4. Sean Naylor, "Flight of Eagles: 101st Airborne Division's Raids into Iraq," Army Times (22 July,1991), 10.

5. Ibid., 11.

6. Ibid.

7. 101st Briefing Charts.

8. Naylor, 11.

9. 101 Briefing Charts.

10. Ibid.

11. Naylor, 11.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.,12.

14. Ibid.,14.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Department of the Army, Operations, Army Field Manual 100-5 (Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, 5 May 1986), 123.

18. Crosbie E. Saint, "Deep Operations," Military Review (July 1988), 3.

19. Robert A. Fitton. "A Perspective on Doctrine: Dispelling the Mystery," Military Review (Feb 1985), 64.

20. FM 100-5, 106.

21. Nora Boustany. "Angry Speech Warns Against Humiliation," Washington Post (Feb 25, 1991), A 11.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Army Times (11 Mar 1991). Special Desert Storm issue.

Barry, Charles L. Major. "Planning Aviation Cross-Flot Operations." Military Review (Jan 1984): pp. 34-45.

Boustany, Nora. "Angry Speech Warns Against Humiliation." Washington Post (25 Feb 91): p. A 11.

Donnelly, Tom. "From the Top: How Commanders Planned Operation Desert Shield." Army Times (24 Feb 92): pp. 8, 12-13, 18, 20 and 24.

Flanagan, Edward M. Jr. "The 100-Hour War." Army (April 1991): pp 18, 21,24,and 26.

Fitton, Robert A. "A Perspective on Doctrine: Dispelling the Mystery." Military Review (Feb 1985): pp. 63-74.

Friedman, Norman. Desert Victory: The War for Kuwait. Annapolis: Naval Institute, 1991.

Hall, Wayne M. Major. "A Theoretical Perspective of AirLand Battle Doctrine." Military Review (Mar 1986): pp 32-43.

Naylor, Sean D. "Flight of Eagles: 101st Airborne Division's Raids into Iraq." Army Times (22 July 1991): pp. 8-12, and 15.

101st Airborne Division (AASLT)." Lessons Learned From Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm." (June 91).

101st Airborne Division (AASLT). Reproduction briefing charts/slides on Desert Shield/Storm. (1991).

Saint, Crosbie E. LTG. "Deep Operations." Military Review (July 1988): pp. 2-9.

Schwarzkopf, Norman H. General. It Doesn't Take a Hero. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

Steele, Dennis. "155 Miles into Iraq: The 101 Strikes Deep." Army (Aug 1991): p. 30.

Tilson, Bettina. "LTG Binford Peay Led 101st During Desert Storm." Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle (31 May 92): p.25.

U.S. Department of the Army. Operations. Army Field Manual 100-5. Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, 5 May 1986.

U.S. News and World Report. Triumph Without Victory. New York: Random House, 1992.